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ATTENTION ECONOMICS EDITORS

INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY WELCOMES NEW ONE STOP SHOP FOR REGISTERING COMPANIES

Skopje, January 5, 2006-- The ability of Macedonian companies to register faster and at a lower cost with a new one stop registration system is welcomed by international donors, especially those who have been supporting the initiative. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a part of the U.S. Mission in Macedonia, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) are among the international donors who have been involved.

The system was inaugurated by Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski; Nake Stojanovski, the Head of the Central Register; and Vice Prime Minister Minco Jordanov on Wednesday, 4 January 2006.

“The administrative and bureaucratic procedures have been reduced from an average of 48 to only 5 days, with reductions in the costs of registering a company, which will now be somewhat over 50 euros,” said Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski at yesterday’s launch.

“The new registration procedure has been designed to be less expensive, and to be simple and fast,” says Carl Wibye, Norwegian Ambassador.

“The development of the one stop shop system is critical to Macedonia’s private sector modernization program”, says Peter Lampesis, Deputy Director of USAID’s Economic Growth Office. “The new year could not have a more promising start than with the launch of the new system.”

“The assistance provided to the Macedonian government has been a great example of donor coordination and collaboration,” said Norimasa Shimomura, Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP. “This is a great step forward in developing the private sector in the country.”

The new system is expected to remove one of the major obstacles to doing business in Macedonia. Companies no longer have to go to one of the three registration courts in Skopje, Stip and Bitola. The new system enables companies to register in any of the 30 registration offices of the Central Register throughout the country. Only one registration number will be assigned. The new system is possible with a new registration bylaw that enabled the transfer of approximately 90,000 registration records of commercial legal entities from the three registration courts to the Central Register and a new registration law that passed the Macedonian Parliament on September 23, 2005.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

This press release is a joint statement by the following international donor agencies that were amongst those involved in assisting the Macedonian government with the development of the new registration system: USAID, the World Bank, UNDP, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EAR.